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PRINCIPLES

Butter
Shew

of

MENDE GRAMMAR

with

Specimen of the Language.

MENDI MISSION,

SHENGO.

1874
Daniel
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PREFACE.

Like all first attempts to express the Principles of an unwritten language, this book contains typographical and other errors.

Yet it is issued believing that it will aid those desirous of acquainting themselves with the structure and uses of Mende. Especially it is hoped that it will greatly aid those, who having received the spirit of Christ, seek to make known to others in the Mende tongue, the Gospel of the grace of God.

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PRINCIPLES OF MENDE GRAMMAR.

The following pages contain some of the Principles of Mende Grammar, and are designed to aid those who are learning the Mende language.

The following characters are used in writing and printing Mende.

E e	L l	P p	F f
A a	B b	T t	V v
E e	D d	H h	Y y
F f	C c	J j	W w
I i	M m	N n	L l
O o	U u	K k	S s
U u	G g	Z z	R r
			& &

Explanation

of characters used in writing Mendë differing in form or sound from common English letters.

Ɛ	ε	like	ε	in	hate.
Α	α	"	a	"	far.
Α	α	"	the	same	but short.
Ε	ε	"	e	in	length " long.
Ɛ	i	"	ee	"	meet.
Ι	i	"	"	it.	
Ο	ο	"	" ο "	note.	
Ω	ω	"	ou	"	bought.
Ο	ο	"	ο	"	not.
W	υ	"	oo	"	moot.
U	υ	"	u	"	put.
ai	"	i	"	pine.	
so	"	ou	"	bound.	
C	c	"	ch	"	church.
G	g	"	g	"	go.
Ŋ	η	"	ng	"	sing.
H	h	"	h	nasalized.	
Ɛ	Ɛ	nasalized,	used	only	as the
		English	"yes".		

REMARKS UPON THE ALPHABET.

The Phonetic system has been used in writing Mendë—that is, each letter represents one sound and one only. No silent or redundant letters are used.

Thirty two letters are used ; but Z only for words of foreign origin, and R commences no word in Mendë and is seldom used except interchangeably with L.

W and Y are only used as consonants.

The vowels are ε s a e i i ο ω o u u.

Whenever any two of them are written consecutively in a word, they form a diphthong, to be pronounced by a single impulse of the voice.

The most frequent combinations are ai like i in pine; so like ou in bound; ia like ear; oi like oi in point.

Two consonants written consecutively in a word must be pronounced together by a single impulse of the voice, as ng, kp, gb.

When three consonants are written consecutively, the first is connected with the preceding syllable and the other two with the vowel following.

Every word and syllable of a word ends with a vowel, except a very few ending in η.

G is always hard as in "go" and hence is never called by its "soft" Eng. name Je.

C has the sound of ch in church and is called Chay.

Ū has the sound of ng in sing. Its sound is its name.

H is a breathing nasally vocalized.

EUPHONIC CHANGES

are numerous and often perplex the learner.

They unusually occur in the initial sound of the second of two associated words, as;

1. The Possessive pronoun and Noun.

Kolo-book, Nya golo—My book.

2. Adjectives following nouns, as—

Ūgova—old, Ksɛs wova—An old box.

3. Nouns following other nouns used as adjectives, as— Fe—pot, Kolu-ve—Iron pot.

4. Transitive verbs preceded by an object, as— Ūgsndo—to gather. Kowui ysndo—Gather the wood.

In this way P changes to B; T to D or L;

Ūg	"	"W or Y;	Nj	"	Y;
K	"	"G;	Kp	"	Gb;
Mb	"	"B;	Nd	"	L;
F	"	"V;	S	"	J.

PARTS OF SPEECH.

THE NOUN AND ITS PROPERTIES.

Gender. There are two ways of distinguishing gender;

First by different words as—

Hindɔ—man, male. Nysha—woman, female.
Kena " Muai "

Ndskpsɔ—young man. Nyspsɔ—young woman.

Ke—father. Nje—mother.

Hini—husband. Nysha—wife.

Kenya—mother's brother Njewulɔ mother's sister.

Sec. By prefixing or suffixing an Adjective. For human beings, Gender is distinguished by connecting the words Hindɔ or Hi and Nysha with the nouns, as—

Hilɔpɔ—boy. Nyshalɔpɔ—girl.

Ndewe hindɔ—brother. Ndewe nysha-lɔ—sister.

For other things having life and for inanimate things personified, Gender is distinguished by suffixing hina—male or—ha female to the noun.

Nika hina—bull. Nika ha—cow.

Te hina—cock. Te ha—hen.

Fskali hina—male Papaw. Fskali ha—female Papaw.

NUMBER WITH DEFINITE AND INDEFINITE TERMINATIONS.

Nouns have two numbers singular and plural.

The Indefinite singular is the simple form of the nouns, as— Mita—spoon; Kolo—book.

The Indefinite plural and the definite singular and plural are formed by terminal inflection.

The Indefinite plural is formed by suffixing "nga" to the indefinite singular, as—

Mita Mitanga—spoons.

Kolo Kolonga—books.

Nysha Nyshanga—females.

Ndi Ndinga—house flies.

The Definite termination of nouns, corresponding in use with the Eng. definite article, is formed in the singular by suffixing "i" which coalesces in sound with the terminal vowel.

The Definite termination "i" is written as a suffix in all cases except in nouns ending in "i" where with the terminal vowel it forms "i", as—Hsni—thing; Hsni—the thing; and in nouns ending in "a" with which "i" coalesces and forms "e" as—Mita—spoon; Mite—the spoon.

The Definite plural is formed by suffixing "sia" to the definite singular form, as—

Mite—the spoon, Mitesia—the spoons.

TERMINAL ENDINGS.

These express the form of Nouns, Definite or Indefinite, Singular or Plural.

TERMINAL ENDINGS.

Sing. indef.	Plu. indef.	Sing. definite.	Plu. definite.
Fsnde—thread, Nds—leaf, Mita—spoon, Seme—barne, Ndi—housefly, Kali—hoe, Ngore—ape, Fo—a large fly, Kolo—book, Mbui—owl, Konu—axe,	Fsndenga, Ndanga, Mitanga, Semenga, Ndinga, Kalinga, Ngoringa, Fonga, Kolonga, Mbungga, Konungga,	Fsnde, Ndsi, Mite, Semei, Ndi, Kali, Ngore, Foi, Kolo, Mbui, Konu,	Fsdesia, Ndsisia, Mitesia, Semeisia, Ndisia, Kalisia, Ngoreisia, Foisia, Koloisia, Mbuisia, Konuisia.

Some nouns denoting things having life form their Definite Plural, by suffixing the definite terminal ending "isia" to the indefinite plural form—the "i" of which, coalescing with the terminal "a" of the indefinite plural ending, forms "ε"

Njenga—goats, Njengesia.

Tenga—fowls, Tengesia.

Mshanga—chiefs, Mshangesia.

Mbslanga—sheep, Mbslangesia.

A few nouns have associated plural forms, as—

Ndɔ—child, Ndɔi—the child.

Ndɛnga—children, Ndɛngesia—the children.

Kena—man, Kene—the man.

Kɔnga—men, Kɔngesia—the men.

DEFINITE FORM.

The definite form is often used (as more expressive) in calling the names of things, as—

Kɔtui for Kɔtu. Gbo a ji? Mbɛ—the rice.

Nouns limited by the Possessive Pronouns Nya, Bi, ʋgi, Mu, Wu, Ti; or their compound forms Nyanda, Nyawɔ, and etc. take the definite form.

Nya ɔloi—My book. Ti welei—their house. ʋginda ɔɔsi. His own box.

Exception; The definite Terminal Ending is usually omitted from a few words, such as—

Ke, Kenya, Demia.

Semo, Bolɔhu, Kshu.

A noun limited by another noun in the Possessive case takes the definite form.

Mesa ɔwoi—The table's leg.

ʋguru difesia, The tree's leaves.

Nouns limited by the Demonstrative Pronouns Ji and Na, with their plurals Jisia and Nasia, take the definite form. ʋgurui ji—This tree. Sɛni nasia—Those bottles.

When a noun used in the definite sense is followed by a modifying adjective, the Definite Terminal Ending is suffixed to the Adjective.

Kolo yɛkpei—The good book.

ʋguru wsi—The large tree.

Kɔtu mumuisia—The small stones.

The definite form of Nouns or Adjectives preceded by "I," designates that to which reference had previously been made. I ɔgurui lo?—Is this the tree? I pelei mia—This is the house. I mbswsi? The large one? I kuɔi mia—It is the small one.

MO.

"Mo" suffixed to Verbs denotes the Doer of the action expressed by the verb.

ʋgɛngɛmo—workman. Kolo-nyegimo—writer.

Ksramo—teacher. Nja-wulimo—oars-man.

"Mo" suffixed to Adjectives denotes the Possessor or the Receptive Agent of the quality expressed by the adjective.

Higbemo— sick person.
 Nyandemo— beautiful one.
 Kpsyamo— strong man.
 Hsmo— dead person.

Verbal nouns ending in "mo" form their Indefinite plural by dropping "mo" and taking "bela"; and to these terminations the usual Definite terminal endings are suffixed.

Komo—soldier, Kobela; Komoi, Kobelesia.

MA.

Ma suffixed to verbs denotes the Place of the action expressed by the verb.

Ūgengema— Place of work.
 Kōla-velemē— The place of weaving.

Verbal nouns ending in "ma" take the usual Definite and Plural terminal endings.

Ūgengema, Ūgengemanga, Ūgengeme, Ūgengemesia.

NI.

Certain nouns form an Indefinite Plural by suffixing "ni" to the indefinite singular.

Kpiti—grass. Kpitini— grasses.
 Ūguuru— tree. Ūguruni— trees.

(In the Illustrations which follow, the English words are often transposed to indicate more clearly the construction of Mende.)

CASE AND CONSTRUCTION.

Nouns admit of no inflection to denote case, The Case of Nouns is determined by their Position in the sentence; by Pronouns and by their Relation to other words.

The Nominative Case precedes the verb and is the subject of it.

In the simple direct form of sentence, the Construction is as follows,

The Nominative, The Objective, The Verb.
 I kōwui dāwēa. He the wood has cut.

Ta lo kəŋsi gbəkpama.
 He is the box making.

In the Intransitive form the Subject with its modifiers precedes and the Verb with its modifiers follows.

I wanga. He has come. Ndəpə wuoləi ji i
 bei lo kpe. Child little this he sat still.

The Noun in the Nominative case is followed by a Pronoun, which indicates its case and is the immediate subject of the verb.

Ndəpəi a mehe me. The child he food eats.
 Tuwa i ŋwoni bəa. Tuwa he the bird
 has shot.

POSSESSIVE CASE.

The Possessive Case is indicated by a Pronoun in the possessive case which follows it.

Kelo ŋgi goloi. Kongesia ti mehei mia.
 Kelo his book. The men their food it is.

The Possessive Pronoun is sometimes omitted.

Observe the Noun governing the Possessive Case, takes the Definite Terminal Ending.

Nika lɔwɔi. Te lɛngesia.

The cow's horn. The hen's chickens.

OBJECTIVE CASE.

The Objective Case may be the Direct Object of a Verb.

Bi nye hɔua? Ti mbɛ hijai lo.
You fish have caught? They the rice cleaned.

The Objective Case may be the Object of a Participle.

I ya nye gbema.
He has gone fish hunting.
Wgi waa tuihɛni hima.
I have come seed planting.

The Objective Case may be followed by a Preposition and governed by it.

I ya tɛ hu.
He has gone the town in.
Ta heini pelei gbela.
He is sitting the house near.
I wɔtɛa ngi ma.
He has turned him against.
Fɔlɔi lo mu mɛhu.
The sun is us above.

THE ADJECTIVE.

Adjectives usually follow the nouns with which they are connected.

Kolo wɛs—great book. Kɔla gɔlɛ—white cloth.

But Nouns used as Adjectives precede the nouns they qualify.

Kotu wele—stone house. Kolu gɛɛsɛ—iron box.

NGO.

Adjectives are joined to the nouns they qualify by the copula “ngo,” which is written as a suffix to the Adjective.

Pelei wɔngo. The house is large.
Kɔlɛ nysɛndɛngo. The cloth is fine.
Njɛ sɛsuungo. The water is deep.

MFA. It is.

The Quality of the Adjective is also asserted by “mia,” which follows the adjective.

Pele wɛs mia. Kɔla nysɛndɛ mia.
House large it is. Cloth fine it is.
It is a large house. It is a fine cloth.

YA. State, condition.

Some Adjectives are connected with the Nouns they qualify by “ya,” which is written between the noun and adjective.

Gbambelɛi ya teve.

The board's condition is thin.

The board is thin.

Cinji ma ya neye.

The plate's surface quality is smoothness.

The surface of the plate is smooth.

Seli ya tili.

The banana's condition is unripeness.

COMPARISON.

The Adjective admits of no terminal inflection to express Degrees of Comparison.

The Adjective is Compared by the use of other words which express degree of quality.

The Positive Degree is the simple form of the Adjective. Ʋgurui wɔngo.

The Comparative Degree is expressed by the adjective in its simple form, followed by,
I dɛwɛa na ma— it surpasses that.

Ʋgurui wɔngo, i dɛwɛa na ma.

The tree is large, it surpasses that one.

The expression is usually abbreviated to—

Ʋgurui wɔngo na ma.

Kɔlɛ ji nysɛndɛngo na ma.

This cloth is finer than that.

The Superlative Degree is expressed by placing the object in comparison with all others of like kind.

Ʋgurui wɔngo i dɛwɛa nguuruisia gbi ma.

The tree is large, it surpasses all the trees.

GBI.

The Adjective Gbi joined with the Definite form of nouns signifies all, every one.

Kɔloi gbi— every book.

Ʋguuruisia gbi— all the sticks.

Gbi with the Indefinite form of nouns signifies none not any.

Kɔlo gbi— no book.

Mbɔwa gbi nya yɛyɛ— I have no knife.

Gbi with the Indefinite Plural form of some nouns has in some cases a Positive signification. Nuinga gbi— all people.

NUMERAL ADJECTIVES.

The Numeral Adjectives Eta, Fɛlɛ, Sɛwa, Nsni, Lɔlu, Woita, Wɔfɛla, Wsyakpa, Tsu, Pu— follow the nouns they modify.

Kɔlo fɛlɛ— two books.

Ʋguuru tsu— nine sticks.

ORDINAL NUMBERS.

Ordinal Numbers are expressed by the proper Numeral preceded by "I" and followed by "Gɛlɛ," often contracted into "Gɛ."

Kɔloi i fɛlɛ gɛ— the second book.

Pɛlei i nsni gɛlɛ— the fourth house.

THE PRONOUN.

The Personal Pronouns are numerous and varied in form and signification.

The **Pronoun** is used not only as a Substitute for the noun but as a Complement to it.

As a Complement, it accompanies the noun, in the Possessive and Nominative case, follows it in position and indicates its case.

POSSESSIVE CASE.

Jina ŋgi goloī.	Ndopoisia ti gšramoi.
Jina his book.	The children their teacher.
Jina's book.	The children's teacher.

NOMINATIVE CASE.

Fstoma i waa.
 Fstoma he has come.
 Fstoma has come.
 Mbe i vslinga.
 The rice it has grown.
 The rice has grown.
 Kongesia ti pelei d̄bi lo.
 The men they the house built.
 Numui ngi gbsyango.
 The person he is strong.
 The person is strong.
 W̄wonisia ti gb̄tongo.
 The birds they are numerous.
 The birds are numerous.

THE PRONOUN AS A SUBSTITUTE.

The **Personal Pronouns** are nine in number and are inflected as follows.

DECLENSION.										
First Person, Sing.			Sec, Person, Sing.			Third Person Sing.				
Nom.	Mgi	Mga	Nya	Bi	Ba	Bia	I	Mgi	Ta	A
Poss.	Nya			Bi			Mgi			
Obj.	Nya	Mge		Bi	Bie		Mgi	Mgie		
Plural.			Plural.			Plural.				
Nom.	Mu	Ma	Mua	Wu	A	Wa	Wua	Ti	Ta	Tia
Poss.	Mu			Wu				Ti		
Obj.	Mu	Mue		Wu	Wue			Ti	Tie	

The Pronouns in the Nominative Case have corresponding Negative forms.

CLASSIFICATION ACCORDING
TO USE.

The Signification of the Pronouns in the Nominative Case, cannot be fully explained separate from the forms of the Verb, with which they are respectively connected; for they aid in forming the tense of the verb. But following arrangement may aid the learner.

The following form is used with verbs expressing past or completed action; but is also used with a tense of the verb denoting present or past continued action; and in interrogation it is used with the present tense of the simple form of the verb.

FORM 1st.

Sing. 1st per. *Ųgi*, 2d per. *Bi*, 3d per. *I*.
Plu. " *Mu*, " *Wu*, " *Ti*.

Ųgi panga. I have done it.
I wsi lo bei. He came here.
Kina ti ye lima. When they were going.
Mu pɛ? Must we do it?
Ųgi pema lo. I am doing it.
Ti gbo bi ma? Shall they help you?

The following form is used with verbs having a potential or future signification.

FORM 2d.

Sing. 1st per. *Ųga*, 2d per. *Ba*, 3d per. *A*.
Plu. " *Ma*, " *Wa*, " *Ta*.

Ųga li lo. I will go. *A vɛɛ lo.* It will grow.
Ma ye lo pema. We will be doing it.

The following form of the pronoun is used with a present progressive form of the verb; and also in emphatic repetition.

FORM 3d.

Sing. 1st per. *Nya*, 2d per. *Bia*, 3d per. *Ta*.
Plu. " *Mua*, " *Wua*, " *Tia*.

Nya lo pema. I am doing it.
Tia lo lima. They are going.
Bia ba pɛ lo.
You (as for you) you will do it.

The following form is used with verbs of the passive voice and with adjectives connected by "ngo."

FORM 4th.

Sing. 1st per. *Nya*, 2d per. *Bi*, 3d per. *Ųgi*.
Plu. " *Mu*, " *Wu*, " *Ti*.

Ųgi yilingo ɛ. He is bound.
Ti higbengo yelɛ. They were sick.
Bi gbsyango. You are strong.

The above is also used as a Possessive Pronoun.

Nya goloji,	My book.
Ti welei,	Their house.
Mu gramoi,	Our teacher.
Bi mese,	Your table.

A Compound Possessive Pronoun is formed by annexing Nda—own, to the pronoun.

Nya nda,	Bi nda,	Ųgi nda.
Mu nda,	Wu nda,	Ti nda.
Nya nda goloji.	My own book.	
Ųgi nda bōwe.	His own knife.	

Nda thus used without the limiting noun immediately following, takes, the Definite terminal ending.

Koloji ji nya nde mia.
This book it is my own.
Wu nde lo. It is your own.

Another form of the Compound Possessive Pronoun is made by annexing Wō to the pronoun.

Wō does not take the Definite terminal ending, nor permit the limiting noun to directly follow it in the sentence.

Knsi ji nya wō mia.
This box it is my own.
Bi wō lo a kōle ji?
Is this your own cloth?

A Compound Personal Pronoun is formed by placing Vuuli—self, after the pronoun.

Vuuli has a singular or plural signification according to the pronoun with which it is joined.

Nya vuuli,	Bi vuuli,	Ųgi vuuli.
Mu vuuli,	Wu vuuli,	Ti vuuli.

The following form of the Pronoun is always used in the Objective case and follows “a”.

Sing.	1st per.	Ųge,	d per.	Bi,	3d per.	Ųgie
Plu.	“	Mue,	“	Wue,	“	Tie.

I panga a tie. He has done it to them.

NEGATIVE FORM OF THE PRONOUN.

used only in the Nominative case.

DECLENSION.

Sing.

First per.	Ųgi.	Ųgs,	Ųge.
Sec per.	Bi,	Bs,	Be.
Third per.	Ti,	As,	E.

Plu.

First per.	Mu,	Ms,	Me.
Sec. per.	Wu,	Ws,	We.
Third. per.	Ti,	Ts,	Te.

CLASSIFICATION according to their use and signification.

The following form is used with verbs of present and past signification.

Expresses denial. Not.

FORM 1st.

Sing.	1st per.	Ųgi,	2d per.	Ba,	3d per.	E.
Plu.	"	Mu,	"	Wu,	"	Ti.

Ųgi nguurai boni.

I did not cut down the tree.

Ti lolima. They are not playing.

The following form is used with verbs of present and future signification.

Expresses prohibition. Must not.

FORM 2d.

Sing.	1st per.	Ųgs,	2d per.	Bs,	3d per.	A.
Plu.	"	Ms,	"	Ws,	"	Ts.

Bs hinde ji we.

You must not do this thing.

Ndopoisia ts li na.

The children they must not go there.

The following form is used with verbs of future signification.

Expresses refusal or inability. Will not.
Can not.

FORM 3d.

Sing.	1st per.	Ųge,	2d per.	Be,	3d per.	E.
Plu.	"	Me,	"	We,	"	Te.

Ųge li. I will not go.

Be gu a pe la. You will not be able to do it.

INTERROGATIVE PRONOUNS.

Ye, Who. Plu. Yeni—used only in the Nominative.

Ye lo a li? Who will go? Ye mia? Who is it?

Yenda Whose—used in the Possessive Case.

Yenda goloi lo a ji? Whose book is this?

Gbe, Gbo, What, Which.

Gbo bi penga?

What have you done?

Ti peni a gbo?

They did it with what?

Gbe hani lo a ji?

What thing is this?

Numui i gbe?

Which person?

DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS.

Ji, This.	Plu.	Jisia,	These.
Na, That.	"	Nasia,	Those.
Kene ji.	This man,	Pelei na.	That house.

Kotui jisia,	These stones.
--------------	---------------

Woni nasia,	Those birds.
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Nya ke,	My father.
---------	------------

Nya nje,	My mother.
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Children use, I ke, Father. I nje, Mother.

THE VERB; CONJUGATION.

The verb in Mende has no formation peculiar to itself. The same word in the same form is often used as a verb, an adjective or a noun.

The verb admits of no terminal endings to express person or number, but has the same form in all persons and numbers.

The imperative singular is the theme of the verb and its modes and tenses are expressed by suffixes, by auxiliaries and by the form of the pronoun, which as a substitute or complement is its immediate subject.

The verb is principally used in the active voice but some verbs admit a passive form.

Momo i pelei ji lani.

Pelei ji tonggo yele a Momo.

TENSE.

The Mende has six tenses.

The PRESENT represents an action as doing at the present time; as,

Nya lo pema. I am doing it.

The IMPERFECT represents an action as doing at some past time; as,

Wgi ye pema lo. I was doing it.

The FUTURE represents an action as one that will be done in the future; as,

Wga pe lo. I will do it.

The AORIST represents an action as simply done; as, Wgi pei lo. I did it.

The PERFECT represents an action as complete in the present; as,

I panga. He has done it.

The PLUPERFECT represents an action as complete at some past time; as,

Kina i ye peni ke i waa.

When he had done it then he came.

MODE.

The Mende has six modes.

The INDICATIVE is used in declaring and in asking questions; as,

I panga. He has done it.

The **SUBJUNCTIVE** expresses condition, uncertainty; as, Ina i pea lo nga ko.

The **POTENTIAL** expresses ability, obligation, permission and inclination; as,

Ųgi hinde go nga li na.

The **INFINITIVE** expresses action or state in a general manner; as, Pe va. To do.

The **IMPERATIVE** expresses command or entreaty; as,

Pele, Do it. Be nga li. Permit me to go.

The **PARTICIPLE** partakes of the nature of both verb and adjective; as,

I ya nye gbema.

He has gone fish hunting.

PARADIM.

Pele, Do.

It is generally used in the contracted form, Pe.

INDICATIVE MODE.

(The Present Participle is made by suffixing "ma" to the theme of the verb; as,

Pelema, Pema—Doing.)

The First Form of the **PRESENT TENSE** is constructed from the Present participle preceded by "lo" and joined to Form 3d of the Pronoun.

I am doing it. Am I doing it?

Singular.

Plural.

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| 1. Nya lo pema. | Mua lo pema. |
| 2. Bia lo pema. | Wua lo pema. |
| 3. Ta lo pema. | Tia lo pema. |

The Sec. Form of the **PRESENT TENSE** is constructed from the Present participle followed by "lo" and joined to Form 1st of the Pronoun.

I am doing it. Am I doing it?

Singular.

Plural.

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| 1. Ųgi pema lo. | Mu pema lo. |
| 2. Bi pema lo. | Wu pema lo. |
| 3. I pema lo. | Ti pema lo. |

The **IMPERFECT TENSE** is constructed from the Present participle preceded by "ye-lo;" or preceded by "ye" and followed by "lo" and joined to Form 1st of the Pronoun.

Ųgi ye lo pema.

Ųgi ye pema lo?

I was doing it.

Was I doing it?

Singular.

Plural.

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| 1. Ųgi ye pema lo. | Mu ye pema lo. |
| 2. Bi ye pema lo. | Wu ye pema lo. |
| 3. I ye pema lo. | Ti ye pema lo. |

The **PERFECT TENSE** is formed by suffixing "nga" often contracted to "a", to the theme of the verb and joining it to Form 1st of the Pronoun.

I have done it. Have I done it?

Singular.

Plural.

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| 1. ʋgi panga. (pea) | Mu panga. (pea.) |
| 2. Bi panga. | Wu panga. |
| 3. I panga. | Ti panga. |

The **AORIST TENSE** is formed by suffixing "ni" often contracted to "i", to the theme of the verb, which is followed by "lo" and joined to Form 1st of the Pronoun.

I did it. Did I do it?

Singular.

Plural.

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. ʋgi peni (pei) lo. | Mu peni (pei) lo. |
| 2. Bi peni lo. | Wu peni lo. |
| 3. I peni lo. | Ti peni lo. |

"Ye" often precedes the verb in this tense and "wa" follows expressing remoteness of time.

The **PLUPERFECT TENSE** is formed by suffixing "ni" to the theme of the verb, which is preceded by "ye" and joined to Form 1st of the Pronoun.

I had done it. I did it.

Singular.

Plural.

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| 1. ʋgi ye peni. | Mu ye peni. |
| 2. Bi ye peni. | Wu ye peni. |
| 3. I ye peni. | Ti ye peni. |

In composition this tense is often preceded by Kina; as, Kina i ye muani, ke i tuwo doa.

The **FUTURE TENSE** is the theme of the verb followed by "lo" and joined to Form 2d of the Pronoun.

I will do.

Will I do?

Singular.

Plural.

- | | |
|---------------|-----------|
| 1. ʋga pe lo. | Ma pe lo. |
| 2. Ba pe lo. | Wa pe lo. |
| 3. A pe lo. | Ta pe lo. |

Woi signifying "in a little while" and Kut-na "in the future" are also used as auxiliaries with this tense.

In another form of the Future Tense, the pronoun is impressively repeated and "lo" precedes the tense forming pronoun. The arrangement is, Pronoun Form 3d; auxiliary "lo" pronoun Form 2d; the theme of the verb.?

It is I who will do it. Is it I who will do it?

Singular.

Plural.

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| 1. Nya lo nga pe. | Mua lo ma pe. |
| 2. Ba lo ba pe. | Wua lo wa pe. |
| 3. Ta lo a pe. | Tia lo ta pe. |

In the above form "mia" is often substituted for "lo."

FUTURE TENSE—Progressive Form.

This tense is constructed from the Present participle followed by "lo" and joined to Form 2d of the Pronoun.

I will be doing it. Will I be doing it?

Singular.

Plural.

1. Nga pema lo.

Ma pema lo.

2. Ba pema lo.

Wa pema lo.

3. A pema lo.

Ta pema lo.

Another form of the same tense with the same signification, is constructed from the Present participle preceded by "ye lo" and joined to Form 2d of the Pronoun.

Singular.

Plural.

1. Nga ye lo pema.

Ma ye lo pema.

2. Ba ye lo pema.

Wa ye lo pema.

3. A ye lo pema.

Ta ye lo pema.

SUBJUNCTIVE MODE.

The tenses of the Indicative Mode nearly all take the Subjunctive form by placing before them *Ena* or some other word expressing some condition of uncertainty; as

I pei lo, He did it. *Ena i pei lo*. If he did it.

The Subjunctive Mode has one FORM peculiar to itself, which is used with either a present, past or future signification as the subject requires. It is formed by suffixing "nga" to the theme of the verb followed by "lo" and joining them to Form 1st of the Pronoun; as, *I penga lo*. If he did it. *Ena* often precedes the pronoun as the sign of the Subjunctive but is usually considered unnecessary, as the form of the verb shows its mode.

Ena i penga lo. If he did it.

If I do it. If I did it. If I shall do it.

Singular.

Plural.

1. *Ena nga penga (pea) lo*. *Ena rau penga (pea) lo*.

2. *Ena bi penga lo*. *Ena wu penga lo*.

3. *Ena I penga lo*. *Ena ti penga lo*.

Another form used occasionally, as in betting is peculiar to this mode.

It is formed by joining the Present participle to Form 2d of the Pronoun, which is preceded by *A*.

If I do this. If I shall do this.

Singular.

Plural.

1. *A nga pema*.

A ma pema.

2. *A ba pema*.

A wa pema.

3. *A a pema*.

A ta pema.

POTENTIAL MODE.

Two Forms of the PRESENT tense occur.

The First is made by joining the theme of the verb to Form 1st of the Pronoun.

I can or must do it. Must I do it?

Singular.

Plural.

1. Ugi peɬ.

Mu peɬ.

2. Bi peɬ.

Wu peɬ.

3. I peɬ.

Ti peɬ.

The Second Form of the Present tense is made, by joining the theme of the verb to Form 2d of the Pronoun.

I may or can do it. Can you do it?

Singular.

Plural.

1. Uga peɬ.

Ma peɬ.

2. Ba peɬ.

Wa peɬ.

3. A peɬ.

Ta peɬ.

Ability, inclination, etc. are often expressed in a form like the Indicative Future.

It is the theme of the verb followed by "lo" and joined to Form 2d of the Pronoun.

I can or will do it.

Singular.

Plural.

1. Uga pe lo.

Ma pe lo.

2. Ba pe lo.

Wa pe lo.

3. A pe lo.

Ta pe lo.

INFINITIVE MODE.

Verbs in the Infinitive Mode are used only in the Present tense.

The verb has two forms. The First is the theme of the verb followed by "va."

The Second is the theme of the verb preceded by "a," and followed by "la."

Infinitives which express the object for which the action of the leading verb was made, take the form with "va."

I waa pe va. He has come to do it.

I kowui dewai lo msjia va.

He cut the wood to sell.

Infinitives following verbs, which denote the beginning, ending, continuing and etc. of the action expressed by the Infinitive, take the form with "a=la."

I tatba a pe la. He has begun to do it.

I gbiaa a yia la. He has ceased to speak.

PARTICIPLE MODE.

Verbs in the Participle Mode have but two tenses, present and past.

The Present tense or Present participle is formed by suffixing "ma" to the theme of the verb; as,

Pelama or Pema. Doing it.
I ya nye gbema. He has gone fishing.
Ta hēini mehe mema.

He is sitting down eating food.

The Past participle (if rightly so called is formed by suffixing "ni" to the theme of the verb; as, Peleni, Did—but is seldom used separate from the auxiliaries, which limit it to the tenses of the Indicative and Subjunctive modes.

I pelēi lo. He did it.
Kina i ye peni ke i levua.
When he had done it, then he rested.

NEGATIVE FORM

of the Verb as used with the Negative Pronouns.

INDICATIVE MODE.

Corresponding Tenses.

The Present tense is formed by joining the Present participle to Form 1st of the Negative Pronoun.

I am not doing it. Am I not doing it?

Singular.	Plural.
1. ʋgi pelēma. (pēma.)	Mu pelēma. (pēma.)
2. Bi pelēma.	Wu pelēma.
3. ɸ pelēma.	Ti pelēma.

The IMPERFECT TENSE is formed by joining the Present participle preceded by "ye" to Form 1st of the Negative Pronoun.

I was not doing it. Was I not doing it?

Singular.	Plural.
1. ʋgi ye pēma.	Mu ye pēma.
2. Bi ye pēma.	Wu ye pēma.
3. ɸ ye pēma.	Ti ye pēma.

Wə used with the above indicates greater remoteness in time.

ʋgi ye pēma wə. I was not doing it in time long past—or I had not been doing it.

The AORIST TENSE is formed by suffixing "ni" to the theme of the verb and joining it to Form 1st of the Negative Pronoun.

I did not do it. Did I not do it?

Singular.	Plural.
1. ʋgi pelēni. (pēni.)	Mu pelēni. (pēni.)
2. Bi pelēni.	Wu pelēni.
3. ɸ pelēni.	Ti pelēni.

The PLUPERFECT TENSE is formed by suffixing "ni" to the theme of the verb, which followed by "wə" and preceded by "ye" is joined to Form 1st of the Negative Pronoun.

I have not done it or I had not done it.
Have I not done it?

Singular.

Plural.

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| 1. ʋgi ye peni wə. | Mu ye peni wə. |
| 2. Bi ye peni wə. | Wu ye peni wə. |
| 3. ɛ ye peni wə. | Ti ye peni wə. |

The FUTURE TENSE is formed by connecting the theme of the verb with Form 3d of the Negative Pronoun.

I can or will not do it. Will you not do it?

Singular.

Plural.

- | | |
|--------------|----------|
| 1. ʋge pələ. | Me pələ. |
| 2. Be pələ. | We pələ. |
| 3. E pələ. | Te pələ. |

POTENTIAL MODE.

Corresponding tense.

The Present tense is formed by connecting the theme of the verb with Form 2d of the Negative Pronoun.

I must not do it. Must I not do it?

Singular.

Plural.

- | | |
|--------------|----------|
| 1. ʋgs pələ. | Ms pələ. |
| 2. Bs pələ. | Ws pələ. |
| 3. A pələ. | Ts pələ. |

Another form used with a Potential Present signification is the same as the Indicative Future. It is formed by joining the theme of

the verb to Form 3d of the Negative Pronoun.
I can or will not do it. Will you not do it?

Singular.

Plural.

- | | |
|--------------|----------|
| 1. ʋge pələ. | Me pələ. |
| 2. Be pələ. | We pələ. |
| 3. E pələ. | Te pələ. |

Is is used with some of the negative forms to express stronger denial; as,

ʋgi ls peni. (emphatic) I did not do it.

ASSOCIATED VERBS

corresponding to the English verb To be.

INDICATIVE MODE.

The First form of the Present tense is formed by joining "lo" to Form 3d of the Pronoun.

I am and etc. Is it I?

Singular.

Plural.

- | | |
|------------|---------|
| 1. Nya lo. | Mua lo. |
| 2. Bia lo. | Wua lo. |
| 3. Ta lo. | Tia lo. |

The Sec. form of the Present tense is formed by joining "lə" to Form 3d of the Pronoun.

It is I. Is it I?

Singular.

Plural.

- | | |
|------------|---------|
| 1. Nya lə. | Mua lə. |
| 2. Bia lə. | Wua lə. |
| 3. Ta lə. | Tia lə. |

The Third form of the Present tense is formed by joining "mia" to Form 3d of the Pronoun.

It is I. Is it I?

Singular.

Plural.

- | | |
|-------------|----------|
| 1. Nya mia. | Mua mia. |
| 2. Bia mia. | Wua mia. |
| 3. Ta mia. | Tia mia. |

IMPERFECT.

The First form of the Imperfect tense is formed by joining "ye lo" to Form 1st of the Pronoun.

I was.

Was I?

Singular.

Plural.

- | | |
|---------------|-----------|
| 1. Ūgi ye lo. | Mu ye lo. |
| 2. Bi ye lo. | Wu ye lo. |
| 3. I ye lo. | Ti ye lo. |

The Sec. form of the Imperfect tense is formed by joining "yele" to Form 3d of the Pronoun.

It was I.

Was it I?

Singular.

Plural.

- | | |
|--------------|-----------|
| 1. Nya yele. | Mua yele. |
| 2. Bia yele. | Wua yele. |
| 3. Ta yele. | Tia yele. |

FUTURE.

The First form of the Future tense is formed by joining "ye lo" to Form 2d of the Pronoun.

I will be.

Will I be?

Singular.

Plural.

- | | |
|---------------|-----------|
| 1. Ūga ye lo. | Ma ye lo. |
| 2. Ba ye lo. | Wa ye lo. |
| 3. A ye lo. | Ta ye lo. |

The Sec. form of the Future tense is formed by joining "yema" followed by "lo" to Form 2d of the Pronoun.

I will be &c.

Singular.

Plural.

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| 1. Ūga yema lo. | Ma yema lo. |
| 2. Ba yema lo. | Wa yema lo. |
| 3. A yema lo. | Ta yema lo. |

The Third form of the Future tense is formed by joining "a yele"—it will be to Form 3d of the Pronoun.

It will be I.

Will it be I?

Singular.

Plural.

- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| 1. Nya a yele. | Mua a yele. |
| 2. Bia a yele. | Wua a yele. |
| 3. Ta a yele. | Tia a yele. |

PRINCIPLES OF ASSOCIATED VERBS.

NEGATIVE.

The Sec. Form of the Present and Imperfect tenses are made Negative, by placing "i" the third per. sing, of the Neg. pronoun Form 1st. before the verb; as,

Nya i læ. It is not I.

Nya i yelæ. It was not I.

The Negative form of the Future tense is formed by joining "ye" to Form 3d of the Negative Pronoun.

I will not be. Will I not be?

Singular.	Plural.
1. Øge ye.	Me ye.
2. Be ye.	We ye.
3. E ye.	Te ye.

SUBJUNCTIVE.

All the preceding tenses may be made to take a Subjunctive form, by placing "ina" or some other word implying condition or uncertainty before the pronoun; as,

Ena bia læ—If it is you—

Ena bi ye lo na—If you were there—

PASSIVE VOICE.

All verbs in the Passive Voice take the suffix "ngo" to the theme of the verb; and all are joined to Form 4th of the Pronoun.

The Passive Voice admits of but three tenses the Present, the Past or Imperfect and the Future.

Øgali—to tie, to bind.

The PRESENT TENSE is indicated by the auxiliary "læ" expressed or understood.

I am bound. Am I bound?

Singular.	Plural.
-----------	---------

1. Nya yilingo læ.	Mu yilingo læ.
2. Bi yilingo læ.	Wu yilingo læ.
3. Øgi yilingo læ.	Ti yilingo læ.

The PAST TENSE is indicated by the auxiliary "yelæ."

I was bound. Was I bound?

Singular.	Plural.
-----------	---------

1. Nya yilingo yelæ.	Mu yilingo yelæ.
2. Bi yilingo yelæ.	Wu yilingo yelæ.
3. Øgi yilingo yelæ.	Ti yilingo yelæ.

Wø used with the above expresses time remotely past.

The FUTURE TENSE is indicated by "a yelɛ"—it will be, subjoined to the verb.

I will be bound. Will I be bound?

Singular.

Plural.

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Nya yilingo a yelɛ. | Mu yilingo a yelɛ. |
| 2. Bi yilingo a yelɛ. | Wu yilingo a yelɛ. |
| 3. ʋgi yilingo a yelɛ. | Ti yilingo a yelɛ. |

Kuuna used with the above expresses time remotely future.

SUBJUNCTIVE.

Verbs in the Passive Voice take a Subjunctive form by prefixing "ina" or some word expressing condition or uncertainty.

NEGATIVE FORM OF THE PASSIVE VOICE.

The PRESENT TENSE is indicated by "i lɛ"—it is not, subjoined to the verb.

I am not bound. Am I not bound?

Singular.

Plural.

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| 1. Nya yilingo i lɛ. | Mu yilingo i lɛ. |
| 2. Bi yilingo i lɛ. | Wu yilingo i lɛ. |
| 3. ʋgi yilingo i lɛ. | Ti yilingo i lɛ. |

The PAST TENSE is indicated by "i yelɛ"—it is not, subjoined to the verb.

I was not bound. Was I not bound?

Singular.

Plural.

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Nya yilingo i yelɛ. | Mu yilingo i yelɛ. |
| 2. Bi yilingo i yelɛ. | Wu yilingo i yelɛ. |
| 3. ʋgi yilingo i yelɛ. | Ti yilingo i yelɛ. |

The FUTURE TENSE is indicated by "e yelɛ"—it will not be, subjoined to the verb.

I will not be bound. Will I not be bound?

Singular.

Plural.

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Nya yilingo e yelɛ. | Mu yilingo e yelɛ. |
| 2. Bi yilingo e yelɛ. | Wu yilingo e yelɛ. |
| 3. ʋgi yilingo e yelɛ. | Ti yilingo e yelɛ. |

THE ADVERB.

The Adverb does not admit of terminal inflection to express degrees of comparison.

Adverbs admitting degrees of quality may be compared by using other words—the same as Adjectives.

Kelo a jia kaka ngi ma.

Kelo walks more quickly than he.

Euphonic changes do not occur in the initial sound of Adverbs.

Adverbs usually follow the word they qualify, but sometimes are separated by intervening words.

GENERAL ADVERBS are those which may be properly joined to many different verbs or adjectives; as the following—

Ƨ, Ǝ, Ǝye,	Aiyò, Yes.	Ssgò, Ssò, Aa.	No.
Tenga,	Perhaps.	Ƴwe,	Surely.
Kaka,	Quickly.	Lele,	Slowly.
Leke,	Only.	Ssha,	Clearly.
Tòke,	Noiselessly.	Sen,	Completely.
Gbsma,	In vain.	Tunu,	Too much.
Bei, Beindò,	Here.	Mia, Miandò,	There.

Adverbs are repeated to Intensify their meaning or make a stronger expression; as—

I pei lo ka ka ka.	He did it very much.
Hugbindingo ti ti ti.	Exceedingly dark.
I ndei lo ss ss ss.	He said it very clearly.
Nysundengo te te te.	It is very beautiful.

SPECIFIC ADVERBS are those limited in their use to one or a few particular verbs or adjectives; as the following—

Fis, Completely.	I tewa fis.
Sò, Quite to.	I hitii lo sò.
Pu, Dimly.	Ƴga tuwo do pu.
Tin, Steadily.	A ngi gbele tin.
Dsò, Brightly.	Hemui a vò dsò.
Pò, Far.	I ya mia po po po.
Kpò, Long since.	I weni wò kpò kpò kpò.
Kpi, Very dark.	Telingo kpi kpi kpi.

Fò, Very light.	Kolengo fò fò fò.
Kpili, Shiveringly.	A gbeli kpili kpili.
Fesa, Hastily.	A jia fesa fesa.
Kpain, Severely.	Kòwongesia ta nya yi kpain kpain.

A few Adverbs are **ONOMATOPOETIC**, as—

Pa, represents the sound of water dropping upon a hard surface.

Nje a hite pa pa pa.

Còle, represents the sound of water dropping into water.

Nje a hite nje hu còle còle còle.

Kpu, represents the sound of beating rice.

Ta mbe hja kpu kpu kpu.

Huwi, represents the sound of walking in water.

A jia nje hu huwi huwi.

Bongòbò, represents the sound of a large hand bell, when hung upon the back of a warrior and rung by his walking motion.

A jia bongòbò bongòbò.

The **ADVERBIAL SENSE** is often given by a noun in the objective case with “a.”

Truly. Ƴga pe lo a tonya— with truth.

Wisely. I pea a nemahu lewe— with wisdom.

Angrily. I ndei lo a ndi dewe— with anger.

Strongly. A jia a kpsya—with strength.
Purposely. I ngi nemua a kege— with purpose.

LA—YA. NOT.

Ys— not, is used in abbreviated expressions;
as— Bi lendei ys ji— from which the verb
“lo” is omitted and the preposition “a” is ab-
sorbed in “Ys”. Bi lendei lo ys a ji.

This is not your canoe.
Bi ndæwæ ys na.
That is not your brother.
Mshe ys ngie?
Is he not the king?
Ųgi goloisia ys tie?
Are they not his books?

Ls and Ys are used, often interchangeably, to
intensify the expression of denial or refusal;
as—

Ųgi ls ji weni wə.
I never did this.
‡ ls bi gənsi doni le.
He has not yet seen your box.
Ųge ls pə gboma.
I will never do it again.
E ls bi psɡa.
He will never pay you.

Ųt—SO.

Ųi is usually associated with some form of
the verb to be, and often precedes it.

Ųi lo na, often abbreviated to, Ųi na,— so it is.

Ųi lo i ye na,	So it was.
Ųi lo a ye na,	So it will be.
Ųi yeɛ,	So it was.
I ye Ųi,	So it must be.
Ųi i le,	It is not so.
Ųi i yeɛ,	It was not so.
Ųi lo I peni,	So he did.
Ųi lo nga pɛɛ,	So it is I will do.
Ųi lo ti ye pɛma,	So it is they were doing.

YE—HOW.

The Interrogative Adverb “ye” precedes the
verb it qualifies; as—

Ba ye pɛ?
How will you do?
Ta ye kənsi ji gbste?
How will they fix this box?
Wa ye li?
How can you go?
Ųga ye kɔɛ ji hɔ?
How shall I sow this cloth?

GBE VA, WHAT FOR?

Gbe va is often used in the Adverbial sense of Why.

Gbe va lo bi peni?
 Why did you do it?
 Gbe va lo be li?
 Why will you not go?
 Gbe va lo ta yenge hs?
 Why will they work to day?

KINA, WHEN, WHILE, AS.

Kina is used as a Conjunctive Adverb; as—
 Kina pelei i ye gbeyoni, ke ti waa heima mbu.

When the house was finished, then they came to dwell in it.

Kina ti ye ndome gbujama ke ti kshi doa.

When they were digging up the ground, they saw the snake.

Kina ngi waa lo, nga pe lo bi va.

When I come, I will do it for you.

Kina ngi ya lo, bi tsto a ngenge ji we la.

When I have departed, you must begin to do this work.

Ke ngi lokoi i bsonga kina i peke ns.

And hsi hand was restored as the other.

THE PREPOSITION.

The following list of words contains the principle prepositions used in Mende.

The first column contains the word in its perfect form, as when used as a Preposition with no object expressed; or (as some Grammarians) when used as an Adverb.

The Sec. column contains the Preposition in its modified form, as used with an object expressed. The third column contains the usual signification.

Rem. Ma, Mba and the compound form Mshu and also Hu, have only one form.

Ye and We are used only with an object expressed.

PREPOSITIONS.

La, A, With.	Mshu, Mshu, Upon, above.
Fa, Va, For.	Mba, Mba, Upon.
We, To, for.	Mbu, Bu, Under, within.
Ye, To.	Ndia, Lia, Among, middle.
Hu, Hu, In.	Ksma, Gsma, At, for, to.
Vga, Ya, In, on.	Kpela, Gbela, Near.
Ma, Ma, On, upon.	to. Tenga, Lenga, Towards.
Poma, Woma,	Behind.

The Usage of the above illustrated.

WA. a koloi.

Come with the book—Bring the book.

Wa la. Come with it—Bring it.
Bi ke lo a ngie? Is he your father?

FA.

Kɛnsi ji ta lo Mɔmɔ va. This box is for Mɔmɔ.
Pɛ ngi va. Do it for him.

WE.

Mite vɛ ngi we. Give the spoon for him—to him.

Wa a nja mu we. Bring water for us.

Rem. We following a pronoun is often contracted to “e”; as, Fɛ ngi’e. Give to him.

Nde mbe. Say it for me.

YE.

Wa nyä ye. Come to me.
Ti hijei Magɔna ye lo. They came from Magɔna.

HU.

Kole ta lo kɛnsi hu. The cloth is in the box.
I nyegia koloi hu. He has written it in the book.

ŲGA.

Ndendei mia njɛ ya.
It is a canoe upon the water.

Ųguitui na gbele; ɲwoni yela ta lo ɲga.
See that tree; there is a bird upon it.

MA.

Jisɔ ye ti ma.
Jesus said to them.
Mbɔwe la mese ma.
Lay the knife upon the table.
I wotea ngi ma.
He turned against him.

MBA.

Ta lo pelei wuu mba.
He is upon the house top.
Hɔu mba.
Hold upon it—Hold it.

MAHU.

Fɔlɔi lo mu mshu.
The sun is above us.
Wa bi lɔ mshu.
Come and stand upon it.
Ti ya ti mshu.
They have gone against them.

MBU.

Ta pelei bu.
He is in the house.
Kina ti kpuaɲɛ doni ke ti waa mbu.

When they saw the farm house then they entered it.

Ti haia nguuri bu.

They have sat down under the tree.

NDĒA.

A mu ndendei lukpe nje lia.

Let us push the canoe into the middle of the water.

Kali gbele kotuisia lia.
See the snake among the stones.

KAMA.

Ūgi waa hse gsma. I have come for medicine.

Li pelei gsma. Go to the house.

Li ksma. Go to it.

KPELA.

Bs put pelei gbela.

You must not put it near the house.

Hiti kpela bi to.

Approach near to it and see.

TEŪGA.

Wa nya lennga.

Come towards me.

Ūguri na doni mu lennga.

The tree that is standing opposite to us.

POMA.

Wa nya wōma. Come after me.

Ti peni nya wōma.

They did it behind me—without my knowledge.

Ūgewo lo mu wōma.

God is with us—to support our cause.

Li pōma. Go for it.

PREPOSITIONS IN COMPOSITION.

A few Prepositions are used as Prefixes to Verbs and Adjectives. The compound word thus formed often retains the distinct significance of its elements, but sometimes a modified signification results; as,

Kpe—to hunt. Ke—to show.

Hugbe—to search into. Hüge—to explain.

Fē—to fill. To—to see.

Huve—to fill full. Hulo—to perceive.

Ūgili—to tie. Kpele to see.

Msyili—to dress. Mshugbele to watch over.

Mo—to burn.

Msmo—to singe.

Ūgela—to sweep.

Msyela—to brush off.

Fe—to blow.

Mave—to fan.

Tewe—to cut.

Ūgstewe—to incise.

Kpole—to swallow.

Mgbolē—to engulph.

Pote—to turn.

Ūgswōte—to turn over.

Ha— to die. Kpe— to hunt.
 ʋgshs— to dull. ʋgskpe— to pursue.

CONJUNCTIONS.

The following is a list of the principle words used as conjunctions.

Ke— and. Ts— and.
 Kee— but. ʔna— if.
 Kɔ— so that. Gbsmaile— because.
 Kina— than. ʋgiye— except.

Ke usually precedes the Perfect tense and also connects words and sentences.

Kee connects sentences.

Kɔ connects the two members of a compound sentence, the latter of which indicates the reason of the former; as,

ʋgi waa kɔ bi ʔinde ji we.
 I have come so that you may do this thing.

Kina connects sentences used in comparison; as,

I fisa bi ʔinde ji we, kina na bi ʔinde na we.
 It is better for you to do this thing than to do that.

Ts connects words and may often be used interchangeably with Ke.

Ts when following a Personal Pronoun in the Nominative case is often contracted with it; as,

Ti ya ts ta. (ta ts ta)
 They have gone he and he.

ʔna is used as the sign of the Subjunctive Mode.

Gbsmaile connects sentences.

ʋgiye is compounded with Ke and expresses contingency: as,

ʋga wa lo ʋgiye ke nje i waa.

INTERJECTIONS.

Kub! Akpɔgbɛ! Ekiani! Surprise.
 Ohɔ! Discovery.
 Ombo! Aɔumbo! Aimbol! Reproof.
 Eya! Aiya! Oya! Oya maiye! Grief, Pity.
 Aɛja! Aɛya! Sorrow.
 Aɔu! Astonishment.
 A! E! Strong feeling from a sudden impression.
 Hɔyɔ! Triumph.
 ʔja! Joy.
 Hiya! Fear.

ERROR.

OMISSION AT PAGE 14.

The Independent case is disconnected from the rest of the sentence and is used by way of address or exclamation; as,

Tuuwa, wa nya ye.
 Tuuwa, come to me.
 Nya ke, be ʋgi li.
 My father, let me go.
 Ndebelssia, mi lo ti na?
 The parents, where are they.

SYNTAX.

The plan of this book includes no lengthy Syntax. The design having been, to express in as brief manner as possible, the principle Grammatical features of the Mende language.

But to exhibit the structure more clearly, I shall introduce one or two Fables. (Ssle) with which they are accustomed to amuse themselves, interlining with English words in the order of Mende.

MBAÐ-PA.

Hinde wə Koli i peni a ngi Bsəmoi.
The thing Leopard he did to his Saviour.

Ku yela ma wə, Koli i lini jejiamā
One time upon, Leopard he went walking

pələ wə hu, ke i gulaa ndəwa wə yela
a road great in, and he fell hole great one

hu, ke i guini a gbia la hu.
in, and he was not able to get out.

I towoi i jiai lo ndəloi hu gbi ; tee,
The report is spread country in all ; saying,

Koli i gulaa ndəwa hu.
Leopard he has fallen a pit in.

Huanga kpere, yela
Of all the animals, one

be i wani, s hugbe.
even he did not come, he did not search it out.

Koli i lembii lo wə ndəwe na hu ka,
Leopard he remained pit that in long,
ke i gsnyaa kəvə ke kəima yila.
he pined away very much like a dog with pups.

Hələ i wani ləwema, kee kina
Elephant he came passing by, but when
Koli i ngi jia wəi menii,
Leopard he his walking sound heard
ke i molia, yee, Ye mia?
then he asked, saying, Who is it?

Hələ ye, Nya mia, Hələ.
Elephant said, I it is, Elephant.

Koli ye ngi ma,
Leopard said him to,

Wa, bi nya gbia ndəwe hu.
Come, you me take out the pit from.

Hələ ye, Nya lo lima Heke ye kaka, nga
Elephant said, I am going Heke to hastily, I
wa lo ngi bi gbia hu.
come will, (and) I you take out.

Kee i wani.
But he did not come.

Ke Ngoro i wani. Koli i ngi msuenei ;
Then Ape he came. Leopard he him entreated ;
kee ye, A luiwaa Koli ma,
but he said, He fears Leopard
s ngi həu.
he must not him catch.

Ŵi lo ns hūngesia gbi ti peleni.
So it is now the animals all they did.

Koli i lembii wə ndəwə hu,
 Leopard he staid the pit in,
 ke huanga ti luwaa a ngi
 and animals they feared to him
 gbia la hu; gbsmaile te,
 take out; because they said,
 Numui a Koli bso,
 The person who Leopard can save,
 Koli a ps lo.
 Leopard he kill him will.

Ndileli i ye wə ndogboi hu,
 Peace it was the forest in,
 huanga gbi ti gshu-gbia.
 the animals all they rejoiced.

Ku yela ma, kuaranga ti. wani
 Time one upon, monkeys they came
 nguuru wua mema njeko gbovoi hu,
 fruit eating njeko thicket the in,
 ke ti koni le, ke
 and they did not know yet, that
 Koli i ye gtilani ndəwa hu.
 Leopard he had fallen a pit in.

Ke i molia, yee, Yeni mia?

And he asked, saying, Who is it?

Ke Tows i ndanga, yee, Muia le-o.
 And Monkey he answered, saying, We it is.

Ke Koli i ndanga, yee,
 Then Leopard he said, saying,
 Tows wa, bi nya gbia ndəwə hu.
 Monkey come, you me take out the pit from.

Tows ye, Uga ye bi gbia hu?
 Monkey said, I how you shall take out?

Ugeya gbi nya yeya.
 No rope my hand (in.)

Koli i potea, yee, Ba bi woli
 Leopard he answered, saying You your tail
 ve lo mbe ndəwə hu, ngi hou
 give will me to the pit in, I must hold it,
 mba, ngi le.
 (and) I ascend.

Tows ye, Kee Uga meni wə,
 Monkey said, But I can hear before,
 te, Numui a bi bso,
 they say, The person who can you save,
 ba ngi wə lo.
 you him will kill.

Koli ye, Sso; nga hinda wanda wə lo
 Leopard, said No; I kindness do will
 a bie; bs lali na ma nya gonyoisia
 to you; you must not heed that my enemies
 ta ndə.
 they say.

Ke Tows i ngi woli vea ngi we, ke
 Then Monkey he his tail gave him to, and
 i hūnga, ke i lea.
 he held it, and he ascended.

Kina i ye leni Tows ye, Nya
 When he had ascended Monkey said, My
 ke, gbe ns nya woli ma.
 father, let go now my tail of.

Koli ye, Ndskep, ye lo wa numu
 Leopard said, Friend, who did a person
 b̄soni, e ys levu, s hunyo?
 save, can he not rest, must he not reward?

Tows ye, Ke levu ji, bi gb̄e nya
 Monkey said, Then rest a little, you cease
 ma. Koli i levui lo ji
 me from. Leopard he rested a little
 ke i ndenga Tows ma yee,
 then he said the Monkey to saying,
 Ndskep bi nya b̄s̄nga ns, kee
 Friend you me have saved now, but the
 mb̄s̄i yskpia.
 salvation complete.

Tows ye, Nya ke nga ye
 The monkey said, My father I how
 ngskpia?
 shall finish it?

Kolii ye, Bi w̄li ye p̄le-p̄le
 The Leopard said, Your tail to a little
 v̄e nya we ngi me, ḡbs̄mail̄e nya lo
 give me to, I eat it, because I am
 h̄sma a nd̄ole.
 dying with hunger.

Tows i gb̄soni, yee, Kūb̄
 The Monkey he cried out saying, Ah!
 nya ke, ji lo hs ngi nd̄eni; Te,
 my father, this it is today I said; They say,
 Numui a bi b̄s̄o, ba ngi ws lo.
 The person who you saves, you him kill will.

Koli ye, Ndskep kone, nya b̄s̄o.
 The Leopard said, Friend I beg, you me save.

Tows ye, H̄ou, bi i nḡue
 The Monkey said, Take hold, you the head
 me, kee bs̄ pepe me.
 eat, but you must not all eat.

Ke Koli i i h̄okp̄e waa
 And the Leopard he the end brought into
 ngi la, i nyuma, ke i
 his mouth, he chewed it, and he
 kp̄ol̄ea.
 swallowed it.

Tows ye, Nya ke, gb̄e ns nya
 Monkey said, My father, cease now me
 ma, ngi li.
 from, I must go.

Koli ye, Āou m̄bo! Ye lo wa, i meh̄sni
 Leopard said, O do! Who is it he food
 meni, e hei ji, i levu?
 ate, can he not sit a little, he rest?

Tows ye, Ke levu kaka nya ke,
 Monkey said, Then rest quickly my father,
 bi gb̄e nyama.
 you cease me from.

Koli ye, Ndskep, bi nya b̄s̄nga,
 The Leopard said, Friend, you me have saved,
 nya vūli ngi kolo, kee nyago kūl̄o,
 I myself I know, but me give a little,
 nya m̄s̄t̄o gboma; nga gb̄e lo bi ma.
 me increase again; (and) I will leave you.

Tòwè ye, Kuò! nya ke ji lo
The Monkey said, Ah! my father this is it
hs bi ye nya golema, bee, Vgi
today you were me tempting, saying, If I
bi bsa, ba hinda wanda wela lo a
you save, you a thing good do will to
nga. Kpele, ba nya me ns fe?
me. See, will you me eat now entirely?

Na lengo, ke i gbuundenga
That being said, then he seized
Tòws woli ma, i kulò lèwè, ke
the Monkey's tail, he a little cut off, and
i mea.
he ate it.

Tòwè ye ngi nemahu, I lèwè
The Monkey said his mind in, He must pass
a pime; kee Koli i gbuundenga ngi ma,
with run; but Leopard he seized him,
i ngi me fò. Tòws i monuisia
he him ate up. The remaining monkeys
ti leni ngurui hu.
they went up the tree in.

Fsle Kuaranga ti Koli longa lo,
Therefore Monkeys if they Leopard see
ta wime, tee, Mbsò pa; ke ti
they run, saying, Saviour killer: and they
lenga nguruisia hu.
ascend the trees in.

Ndòpò nyeuyengesia, a njia wòvè
Little children the you story old

ji meni, wu jòwi Mbsò ps ma.
this hear, you must fear the Saviour killer.

NDÒVÒ TA NDÒKULÒ.
TOAD AND CHAMELEON.

Ndòvò mia wò ts Ndòkulò
Toad it was and Chameleon
ti msli hòuni.
they a dispute held.

Ndòvò ye, I wòvani Ndòkulò ma.
Toad said, He was older Chameleon than.

Ndòkulò ye, I wòvani Ndòvò ma.
Chameleon said, He was older Toad than.

Ke ti ngusnga, ti gbia
And they wagered, they came

nunga ye, ti wale va ti luahu.
out persons to, them call to them between.

Ke nunga ti kurui wò.
And persons they granted it.

Ti ti molii lo, tee;
They them asked, saying;

Ò msli i nysnia wu yela ge ma?
If the discussion spoils you one upon?

Te, Hsni gbi lo i ngusni
They said, Thing every he wagered
a fe i pake we.
he will give the other to.

Vji lo ti hulani.
So it is they agreed.

Te; Ndòvò, gbe va lo be,
 They said; Toad, why is it you say,
 bi wòvani Ndòkulo ma?
 you are older Chameleon than?
 Ndòvò ye, Nya lo ngi ndani, ngee;
 Toad said, I am the one that said, saying;
 ngi wòvani Ndòkulo ma, hòe.
 I am older Chameleon than, hear.

Kpèlèi wò Ngewò i nya
 The time past when God he me
 gbsteni, ndoloi hēingo yelè a
 made, the earth existed with
 mbimbili, a kere kere, hani gbi i
 hillocks and hummocks, nothing was
 ye nduahuisia.
 in the spaces between.

Ngewò i ndei lo nya ma, yee; Ndòvò
 God he said me to, saying; Toad
 ndoloi hēingo a kere kere, hupongo
 the earth is settled with hummocks, mixed
 i lè, fslè pinde-pinde bi
 together it is not, therefore jumpjump your
 nda jia mia.
 own walk it is.

Pinde-pinde jia wò Ngewò i tani
 The Jumping walk God he gave to
 mbe, ke ngi ye pelama kpèlèina ma wò
 me, and I was doing it time that upon past
 ndoloi hēingo yelè a kere kere, ke
 the earth settled was with hummocks, and

i welèa wò a nya jia gili.
 it became my walking manner.

Ngì wòvani huangesia gbi ma ta gukuu,
 I am older the animals all that crawl,
 ta gende, ta jia
 (and) that drag themselves (and that walk
 tème, ta gowò ke bia be Ndòkulo.

and that fly and you also Chameleon.
 Ji va lo, Ngè; Ngì wòvani Ndòkulo ma.
 It is for this, I say; I am older Chameleon than.

Ke nunga ti Ndòkulo molia, tee;
 Then persons they Chameleon asked, saying;
 Gbe va lo be; Bi wòvani Ndòvò
 Why it is you say, You are older Toad
 ma? Ndòkulo i potèa, yee; Nya
 than? Chameleon he answered, saying; My
 gbste gbelème wò ndoloi mbengo i yelè
 creation time at, the earth dry it was not
 kina ns a fèlèi ji.
 as now at day this.

† kpskpsò wò, bebengo yelè.
 It was not firm, it was soft.
 Nuumu s jia ma a kpsya,
 A person he must not walk upon it heavily,
 a lombu lo.
 he will sink.

Ngewò i ndei lo nya ma, yee, Bi nda
 God he said me to, saying, Your own
 jia lo a tème, lele jia.
 walk is a dragging, a slow walk.

Ngì wòvani huanga gbi ma, ta gende,

I am older animals all than, that crawl,
 ta gowò, ta gukui, ta winde, ke bia
 that fly, that trail, that jump, and you
 be Ndòvò.
 also Toad.

Lele jia wò Ẹgawò i feni mbe, Ẹgi
 The slow walk God he gave to me, I
 ye pama wò ndòlò bebei ma, ke i
 was doing of old earth the soft upon, and it
 wea a nya nda jia gili
 has become my own walking manner.

Ji va lo, Ẹge, Ẹgi wòvani Ndòvò ma.
 This for (it) is, I say, I am older Toad than.

Ẹna i wòvani nya ma, a Ẹgi go a
 If he is older I than, you him may give
 Ẹsni gbi Ẹgi Ẹgusni.
 thing every I wagered.

Kee ina Ẹgi wòvani Ẹgi ma, a
 But if I am older him than, you
 nya go a Ẹsni gbi i Ẹgusni.
 me may give thing every he wagered.

Ẹgi lo i ye na ti vanjo ti
 So it was they both they
 velini. Ẹna bi ye na
 submitted the matter. If you were there
 wò kpèlèi na ma, ye lo wò ba
 that time upon, who is the one you
 Ẹgi lèmu? Ke ye lo wò
 him will adjudge right? And who is it you
 ba Ẹgi le?
 him will adjudge wrong?

